

I am General Manager of a group of radio stations in the Springfield, MA, area.

I am concerned when it appears satellite radio companies like XM and Sirius are attempting to image themselves as local providers of information. Coverage starting with weather and traffic is contrary to the FCC grant of licensing to these companies.

If audiences are led to believe that these services are and can be like the same local services they have come to know from over the air broadcasters, then our local communities are the ones who will likely lose out. The truth is that satellite radio was not created for nor can it realistically ever provide the same depth of service to our communities as the terrestrial based radio industry. An attempt to dupe the public into believing that satellite stations are local, will only serve to destabilize the mainstream radio broadcast industry and reduce its capacity to do the kind of local community support that the public expects from us.

Since its earliest days, the radio broadcast industry has always considered serving our local communities as the cornerstone of our existence. I cannot count the number of times over the years that I have experienced reminders that we don't own the airwaves. They belong to the public and as the custodians of these frequencies, it is incumbent upon us to serve their needs. We go through great lengths to speak with community leaders in order to ascertain the biggest issues facing our local areas. Then we use that information to insure that we are tailoring our public affairs programming towards those specific issues.

But that's just the beginning. We also make free airtime available to local public service organizations so that they may reach the local community with their important messages. We raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in food annually for the most needy of our citizens. Provide the "over the air soundtrack" for the region's biggest fireworks display that attracts and restores community pride to thousands and thousands of local residents. This is but the tip of the "iceberg" of what we provide locally.

As an industry, we provide our local communities with billions of dollars that we raise each year, individually, station by station, city by city by doing benefit concerts, golf tournaments, food drives, etc. I cannot think of a single major event that I have been involved with over the years as a radio broadcaster that didn't include some way to add resources to a worthy cause. We should also mention extraordinary circumstances such as disaster relief or the events of September 11, 2001.

Serving the needs of our communities is so much a part of everything we do as broadcasters that it seems almost commonplace and might be taken for granted and maybe that's okay. We don't do it for the recognition. We just do it.

Over the years, our industry has continually done its part. It is time for the FCC to keep its promise to the broadcast radio industry. These satellite radio services were intended to be national and the FCC should hold them responsible to the covenants that they made and promised to abide by, when authorized to create a satellite service.

Respectfully submitted,
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General Manager
Stations WAQY, WLZX, WHNP